Seasonal vs Pandemic Influenza

FACT SHEET

Seasonal Influenza	Pandemic Influenza
Occurs every year, typically in the fall.	Occurs rarely, only three times in the past century. The last pandemic was in 1968.
Is caused by influenza virus strains that circulate each year, but change slightly from year to year.	Is caused by a new virus strain never before seen in the human population.
Individuals usually have some immunity from having the virus before.	Since a pandemic occurs when a new virus circulates, most people will have little or no immunity to it.
Healthy adults are not usually at risk for serious complications.	Healthy people may be more at risk for serious complications as their immune systems overreact to the new virus.
The health care community can usually meet public and patient needs.	The health care community will be quickly overwhelmed.
Vaccine is available, and is developed in advance, based on known virus strains.	Vaccine will likely not be available for 6—9 months. Individuals may need two doses of vaccine for full protection against the virus.
Supplies of antiviral medications are usually available.	Antiviral medications will be limited in supply and may not be effective against the virus.
On average 36,000 people will die in the United States each year from seasonal influenza and its complications.	The number of deaths will be high, possibly even millions worldwide.
Regular symptoms include — fever, cough, runny nose and muscle pain.	Symptoms could be more serious and medical complications more frequent.
There will be a small impact on the community, such as limited school closures and employee absenteeism.	There will likely be a significant impact on the community—social disruption, limited services, school closings, social events cancelled and limited business hours.
There may be a small impact on the United States and world economy.	There will likely be a huge impact on the United States and world economy.

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Springfield-Greene County Health Department
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11/22/06
FS1014